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Bellingham
Rural District Council.

REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER.

FORTY SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT,
1925.

J. CATHERALL AND CO., PRINTERS, HEXHAM.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT,

For the Year ending December 31st, 1925.

Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

Area.—The size of the Bellingham Rural District is 246,580 acres, or an extent of 385 square miles, being the largest Rural District in England and Wales. It consists of 28 parishes (comprised in 13 Ecclesiastical Parishes), which for convenience I have grouped into sub-areas as follows:—

Ecclesiastical Parishes.		Sub-Areas.		Population, 1921.
Bellingham	...	Bellingham	...	1392
Thorneyburn	}	Falstone	...	1207
Falstone				
Greystead				
Corsenside	...	Corsenside	...	718
Otterburn	}	Otterburn	...	879
Horsley				
Byrness				
Birtley	}	Wark	...	1133
Wark				
Kirkwhelpington	}	Kirkwhelpington	...	623
Kirkharle				
Thockrington				
				5952
				202

Population at Census 1921.—5,952. Males, 2,955. Females, 2,997.

The number of families or separate occupiers was 5,795. The rooms occupied 5,930, or 1.02 rooms per person.

The population for the whole district as estimated by the Registrar-General was 5,676.

There are 1,344 inhabited houses, which makes an average of 4.2 persons per house.

Physical Features.—The principal feature of the district is its expanse of long, rolling, undulating bare hills (devoid of trees), which become wilder, more rugged, and higher towards the west, where they assume altitudes of about 2,000 feet above sea level. These are divided into ranges formed by the rivers North Tyne and Rede, and their tributaries. About one-fourth of the district situated in the eastern part is good grazing, but the remaining three-fourths is poor, boggy land, covered with heather and bent, requiring in many instances several acres to maintain one sheep. The only woodlands and cultivated lands are situated in the valleys near the watercourses.

The chief geological formations are Coal, Ironstone, Limestone, Freestone, Clay, Shale, and Fireclay.

Coal, which is plentiful, is worked at Plashetts, Billerley, and Hareshawhead (chiefly landsale). Freestone is worked at Woodburn for building purposes, and limestone is chiefly worked for road mending. These mines give employment to about 500 men. The only Factory we have is the Woollen Mill at Otterburn, which employs about 50 hands. The chief industry in the district is agriculture, and the social conditions are those usually existing amongst a community of hill farmers, there being comparatively an absence of poverty.

Rateable and Assessable Value.—The rateable value of the district is £96,840; assessable value, £52,262.

Poor Law Relief.—The amount expended in Poor Law Relief for the year ending March 31st 1925, was:—In-Maintenance, £436 2s 5d, and Out-Relief £910 19s 6d, being a total of £1,347 1s 11d.

There are no Medical Charities within the area. The Royal Victoria Hospital, Newcastle, is used as a centre, but it is not sufficient, in evidence of which there is always a long waiting list.

During the year 1921, the Hexham and District War Memorial Hospital was opened. It contains between 25 and 30 beds, and is intended to benefit persons residing in the district covered by the 4th N.F. recruiting area. It is principally supported by voluntary donations and annual subscriptions, by payments made by or on behalf of patients, and by the income for the time being arising from invested funds.

Vital Statistics: Births.—During the year 1925, there were registered 89 births, 55 males and 34 females; 4 of these were illegitimate, 2 males and 2 females. The Registrar-General

estimates the population for birth-rate at 5,676. This makes the birth-rate 15.6 per 1,000, which is 2.7 less than the birth-rate for England and Wales.

The following table shows the number of births registered in different areas in the district for 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1925:—

	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.
Bellingham	24	18	22	18	22
Falstone	24	23	27	23	11
Corsenside.	11	20	14	13	20
Otterburn	18	18	19	18	11
Wark	9	9	12	12	9
Birtley	10	3	5	7	4
Kirkwhelpington ...	13	9	13	12	8
	109	100	110	103	85
Births, 1925—Inward Transfers ...					4
Total Births ...					89

Deaths.—There have been 58 deaths registered in the district, to which must be added 7 deaths of persons whose residence was in the district, but who died elsewhere, outside of the district, which makes the number 65, 26 males and 39 females. The Registrar-General's estimate of population for death-rate is 5,676; the death-rate therefore is 11.4 as compared with 11.9 for 1923, and 12.2 for England and Wales for 1925. As the total number of births was 89, and the deaths 65, it follows that the difference of 24 was naturally added to the population.

The following table shows the rates for 1923, 1924, and 1925:—

	1923.	1924.	1925.
Zymotic death-rate ... ..	.52	.69	1.7
Tuberculous Disease ... ..	.88	.69	.52
Respiratory	1.2	.17	1.4
Cancer	1.4	1.9	1.7
General	11.9	11.8	11.4
Infantile, per 1000 births	67.7	84.1	67.4

The chief causes of death are set out in the following tables, as well as the vital statistics for the whole district for 1925 and preceding years.

Bellingham Rural District.

DEATHS REGISTERED DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR
1925, AND CAUSES.

Causes of Death.				Nett Deaths of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the district.		
				Male	Female	Totals
All Causes	Certified	...	...	26	39	65
	Uncertified		...			
Enteric Fever				...	1	1
Influenza				4	5	9
Pulmonary Tuberculosis				...	2	2
Other Tuberculous diseases				...	1	1
Cancer, malignant disease				4	6	10
Cerebral Hæmorrhage				1	4	5
Heart Disease				4	10	14
Bronchitis				3	1	4
Pneumonia (all forms)				3	1	4
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum				1	...	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis				...	1	1
Congenital Debility and Premature Birth				2	2	4
Other defined diseases				4	5	9
Totals				26	39	65

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1925 and previous Years.

Name of District—Bellingham Rural.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.			TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.		TRANSFERABLE DEATHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Uncor-rected Num-ber.	Nett.		Num-ber.	Rate.	of Non-residents registered in the District.	of resi-dents not registered in the District.	Under 1 Year of Age		At all Ages.	
			Num-ber.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Num-ber.	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1919	5213	76	...	13.9	74	14.1	...	9	3	39.4	83	15.9
1920	5421	133	...	24.5	66	12.1	...	2	6	45.1	68	12.5
1921	5630	109	...	19.3	55	9.7	...	5	6	55.4	60	10.6
1922	5689	105	...	18.4	72	12.6	...	4	7	66.6	76	13.3
1923	5687	118	...	20.7	65	11.4	...	3	8	67.7	68	11.9
1924	6221	107	...	17.7	63	10.1	...	5	9	84.1	68	11.8
1925	5676	89	...	15.6	58	10.2	...	7	6	67.4	65	11.4

Area of District in }
 acres (land and } 246,580 Acres.
 inland water)

Total population at all ages, 5952
 Number of inhabited houses, 1344
 Average number of persons, per house, 4.2
 } At Census, 1921

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1925.

Name of District—Bellingham Rural.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Number of Cases Notified.										Total Cases Notified in each locality.				
	At all Ages.	At Ages.—Years						Under 1	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.	
		Under 1	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.								
Enteric Fever ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Bellingham
Scarlet Fever	13	...	4	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Falstone
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	9	...	...	1	2	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Corsenside
Other Tuberculous Diseases	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Otterburn
Pneumonia ...	10	...	1	2	1	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Wark
Diphtheria ...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Birtley
Erysipelas ...	3	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Kirkwhinton
Totals ..	39	...	5	9	10	6	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10

No Isolation Hospital,

Bellingham Rural District.
INFANT MORTALITY, 1925.

Nett Deaths from stated causes at various ages
under 1 year of age.

Cause of Death.		Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	4 weeks & under 3 months.	3 months & under 6 months.	6 months & under 9 months.	9 months & under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
All causes	Certified										
	Uncertified										
Congenital Debility	...	3						1			4
Other Causes	...	2									2
Totals	...	5						1			6

Nett Births, registered during the Calendar year—Legitimate, 85.
Illegitimate, 4.

Nett Deaths registered during the Calendar year of Legitimate Infants, 5.

Bacteriological Examinations.

			Negative.		Positive.		Total.
Diphtheria	...	...	16	...	2	...	18
Tuberculosis	...	...	7	...	4	...	11
Enteric	...	...	2	...	—	...	2
							—
							31

During the earlier months of the year, viz., January, February, and March, influenza of a severe type occurred in several areas of the Union, fortunately not in the form of an epidemic. Nine deaths were attributable to this disease.

Thirteen cases of scarlet fever occurred in four Parishes of the district, viz., six in Bellingham, three in Corsenside, two in Falstone, and two in Otterburn Parish.

In April one case of diphtheria occurred in East Woodburn. During the month of June, on account of the prevalence of measles affecting the scholars attending the Bellingham Council School, it was considered advisable to close that institution for a period of between two and three weeks.

Proposed Public Convenience at Otterburn.—A private Committee has now been formed and are dealing with this matter.

Small-pox.—Owing to the proximity of small-pox and seeing that there is a good deal of social and commercial intercourse with infected areas, I issued an appeal at the beginning of June urging the inhabitants of the various districts of the Union, for their own health and the health of the community at large, and in order that this dread disease may be stamped out, the necessity of vaccination, especially those who have never been vaccinated and those who have not been vaccinated within the past ten years. I am pleased to report that the offer was greatly taken advantage of.

Hospital Accommodation.—We have no isolation hospital for this district. During the month of June, your Medical Officer, along with members of Council appointed, attended a joint meeting at Hexham called by the County Medical Officer (Dr W. F. J. Whitley) to consider the question of a Joint Infectious Diseases Hospital for the Unions of Hexham, Prudhoe, Haltwhistle and Bellingham.

Representatives from the other several Unions were present. It was the unanimous desire that such a scheme should be carried into effect. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

As a precaution, chicken-pox became notifiable by your Council on 14th July, 1925, for twelve calendar months. This resolution ought not to be rescinded until the county is free from small-pox.

The Hospital for Pulmonary Tuberculosis is provided by the County Council, and is situated at Wooley, near Hexham. A tuberculosis dispensary is situated in Hexham.

Maternity and child welfare comes under the jurisdiction of the County Council, who are the local supervising authority, and provide a health visitor for the district.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—Branches of the Northumberland County Nursing Association have been established in the valleys of North Tyne, Reed and Wansbeck for several years; the first mentioned has been in existence for 17 years.

Food.

Milk Supply.—There are 8 registered cowkeepers and dairymen whose dairies and cowsheds have been frequently inspected, and are kept up to the standard required of them, but the greater part of the milk is supplied by farmers who are not registered. The wholesomeness of the milk produced within or brought into the areas is unquestioned.

Meat.—Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, came into operation on the 1st April, 1925. The Rural District Councils (Slaughter Houses) Order, 1924, came into operation on the 1st January, 1925. There are no public slaughter houses. There are 7 private slaughter houses which are registered. They have been examined, and found to be in a satisfactory condition in every way.

Slaughter-houses.—In all of them slaughtering takes place at fixed times on fixed days, viz., Mondays or Tuesdays.

Private Slaughter-houses.

					In 1920.	In Jan., 1925.	In Dec., 1925.
Registered	...	...	...	—	...	7	7
Licensed	...	...	...	10	...	—	—
				—		—	—
			Total	10		7	7

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.—In the period under review, viz., 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 230 cases of notifiable infectious diseases occurred, giving an average of 38.3. The most favourable year was 1920, when only 21 cases were recorded.

1920	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21 Cases.
1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36 „
1922	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	45 „
1923	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	45 „
1924	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36 „
1925	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	45 „

The following Form gives the list of notifiable diseases and the year:—

	Scarlet Fever		Pneumonia		Tubercular Diseases		Diphtheria		Erysipelas		Chickenpox
1920	8	..	1	..	8	..	4	..	0	..	0
1921	18	..	2	..	12	..	0	..	4	..	0
1922	17	..	13	..	11	..	3	..	0	..	0
1923	17	..	13	..	14	..	1	..	0	..	0
1924	12	..	13	..	9	..	2	..	0	..	0
1925	13	..	11	..	8	..	1	..	3	..	9
Totals	85		53		63		11		7		9—228

Chickenpox became notifiable in July, 1925.

One case of poliomyelitis occurred in 1922 1

One case of Encephalitis Lethargic occurred in 1925 .. 1

Grand Total 230

Prompt use in diphtheria of anti-toxin was noted in all cases of this disease.

Facilities for examination of bacteriological specimens are available at the Bacteriological Laboratory, College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and are taken advantage of.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) DURING THE YEAR 1925.

DISEASE.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Smallpox	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever ...	13	...	...
Diphtheria ...	1	...	...
Enteric Fever ...	1	...	1
Puerperal Fever ..	...	...	...
Pneumonia .	11	...	4
Erysipelas ...	3	...	...
Chickenpox ...	9	...	...
Encephalitis ...	1	...	...

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES & MORTALITY DURING 1925.

AGE PERIODS.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...
10	1	..	..	...	...	...	...	...
15	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20	...	1	...	2	...	1	...	...
25	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
35	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
45	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
55	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	..
65 and upwards	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Totals	6	3	...	2	...	2	...	1

Notification Efficient

General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

(A) Medical Officer of Health, part time officer.

(B) One Sanitary Inspector, who also acts as Sanitary Surveyor, Building Surveyor, Inspector under the Petroleum Acts, and Highway Surveyor for the whole area. Full time officer under the above headings. He holds the certificate of the Sanitary Institute, and is a member of the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water.—The town of Bellingham and the village of Wark are supplied by public water supplies. The supply is constant in each case. In the case of Bellingham the distribution is direct to the houses, whilst at Wark a number of houses are supplied direct, a few standpipes still remain. The source of supply in each case is from springs situated away amongst the hills and far removed from any possible chance of pollution.

Closet Accommodation.—Ashpits and dry closets are in use in the smaller parts of the area. In Bellingham and Wark a large number of these dry closets are being converted into water closets.

Scavenging.—The scavenging of the area is done by the occupiers themselves.

Schools.—The sanitary condition of the Schools in the Union is satisfactory, but the supplies and arrangements of hand basins, etc., are in several instances inadequate. The water supply to Schools is on the whole the same as the village has.

Housing.

General Housing Conditions in the Area.

1. Practically the whole of the houses in the area are of stone, having been in existence for a great number of years. In most cases they are without damp courses, the stone is more or less of a porous nature, the principal cause of complaint is dampness.

2. (a) The greater part of the district is supplied so far as the general need of houses is required. There is, however, a slight shortage of houses in the Parishes of Bellingham, Corsenside, Falstone, and Otterburn.

(b) The question of providing additional houses is being left to private enterprise.

3. No important change in population is anticipated.

Overcrowding.—There is no overcrowding in the area.

Fitness of Houses.—(1) (a) General dampness in most cases. (b) General dilapidations found to exist in unfit houses, due to the small rentals received and the inability of owners to carry out proper repairs on rentals received, and again the shortage of labour in the building trades.

(2) Action is usually taken by service of notices or by interview with the owners. These requests are usually met in time, but no great amount of work can be done in a given time through the inability of local tradesmen to carry out quantities of work.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1925.

During the year 367 inspections were made, and 508 defects and nuisances were found. Notices to remedy these defects, etc., were served, and in the majority of cases the notices were complied with or attention promised.

New Buildings.—Only one new house has been completed during the year, viz., at Falstone. The following plans have, however, been approved for new buildings, some of which are now in hand:—

Wooden bungalow at Knowesgate Station.
Conversion of a cottage at Otterburn into motor garage.
Alterations to Bank of Liverpool and Martins, Bellingham.
Fold yard at Reedswood Farm.
Village Institute, Birtley.
Four dwelling-houses, Wark, for A. Charlton.
One house, Wark, for H. Wright. ...

Plashetts Village.—The scheme for the improvement of these houses is being slowly carried out. The most notable improvement is the erection of sanitary conveniences. Other improvements are still being carried out.

Sewers and Drainage.—On the whole these are working satisfactorily throughout the district. Slight trouble has been experienced at Otterburn, where the levels are flat, owing to the flush tank on the north side being out of action. This is being repaired, and when in order no further trouble is anticipated. Sewage systems are required for Greenhaugh Village and Lanehead, and rubbish tips at Otterburn and Greenhaugh.

Sewage Disposal Works.—These have been regularly inspected, and with the exception of small defects have been found in good order and giving an excellent effluent.

Water Supplies.

High Rochester Village.—A supply is badly needed for this village, but so far the owners will not move in the matter. The cost of the scheme is too large for the Council to proceed under the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, but negotiations are still in progress with the owners, and it is hoped to soon be able to give a supply.

Mounsey Haugh, Falstone.—The supply to these cottages is inadequate, and should receive attention.

Bellingham Water Supply.—This on the whole has been thoroughly satisfactory. An ample supply has been maintained during the year.

Wark Water Supply.—This has been quite satisfactory.

Greenhaugh and Lanehead.—Water supplies are badly needed for these places. Schemes for provision of same were in hand before the war, but since then nothing has been done.

Cowsheds, Dairies, and Milkshops.—These have all been regularly inspected, and in each case have been found clean and in good order.

Slaughter-houses.—There are now 7 registered slaughter-houses in the district.

Disinfection.—Necessary fumigation has been carried out in several instances after infectious disease. Disinfectants have been supplied on request for disinfecting purposes.

Housing Conditions, year ended 31st December, 1925. ***General Statistics.***

Area (acres)	246,580
Population (Census 1921, and estimated 1925)	5,952
Number of inhabited houses (1921)	1,344
Number of families or separate occupiers (1921)	1,121
Rateable value	£52,688
Sum represented by a penny rate	£220

Housing.

Number of new houses erected during the year—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b)	1
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts—	
(i) By the Local Authority	1
(ii) By other bodies or persons	1

1. Unfit dwelling-houses—

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	367
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	Nil.
(2) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil.
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	60

2. Remedy of defects without service of formal notices—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	60
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3. Action under Statutory Powers—

(A) Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil.
--	------

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices—	
--	--

(a) By owners	Nil.
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(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ...	Nil.
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(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owner of intention to close	Nil.
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B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	308
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(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices—	
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(a) By owners	35
----------------------	----

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ...	Nil.
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C.—Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925—

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	Nil.
---	------

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil.
---	------

(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	Nil.
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(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil.
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(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders (voluntarily)	1
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I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. GRAHAM MILLER,

Medical Officer of Health.

April, 1926.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT, 1925. (Sanitary Officers' Order, 1922, Art. 19 (12).

Name of District:		Housing.										Sanitary Conveniences.		Workshops & Workplaces.					Totals.										
BELLINGHAM RURAL.		Action under P.H. Acts.				Water Supply.		Drainage		Structural Defects.		Insufficient.	Structural Defects.	Insufficient.	Foul.	Untapped or Dilapidated.	Insufficient.	Dairies & Cowsheds.	Slaughter Houses.	Keeping of Animals.	Paving of Yards.	Other Nuisances including Smoke.							
Population:						Insufficient.		Foul.																					
5,952																													
Name of Inspector:																													
HENRY MOODY, M. Inst., M. & C.Y.E.																													
Number of Inspections made -																													
Number of Defects or Contraventions of Bye-laws found -																													
Number of Defects, etc., outstanding from previous year -																													
Number of Informal Notices by inspector -																													
Number of Defects or Contraventions remedied after Informal Notice.																													
Number of Statutory Notices Served by L.A.																													
Number of Defects or Contraventions remedied after Statutory Notice.																													
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